

Graduate student development through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

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Abstract: The scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) can be a valuable tool in preparing graduate students as future faculty. Yet, graduate students are often warned that the academic job market does not value SoTL research. We present results of a survey of current and former graduate students who conducted SoTL research. Respondents overwhelmingly perceived positive reactions to their SoTL work while on the academic job market, and reported that SoTL played an important role in their professional development. These findings have important implications for those who seek to encourage graduate student involvement in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Keywords: graduate student development, academic job market

Since Boyer's (1990) seminal book on the work of the professoriate, in which he coined the term the scholarship of teaching, there is a growing interest in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) in higher education. Broadly defined, SoTL sees "the work of the classroom as a site for inquiry, asking and answering questions about students' learning in ways that can improve one's own classroom and also advance the larger profession of teaching" (Huber & Hutchings, 2005, p. 1). SoTL is teaching-as-research that aims to improve student learning, and with respect to graduate students, SoTL arguably broadens research and scholarly teaching training and prepares them as future faculty (McKinney, 2007, p. 14). Lee Shulman argues that, "institutions of higher education must make sure that novice colleagues learn content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and how to document evidence that learning happens" (Chick, 2006, p. 7). As a tool for preparing future faculty, SoTL has the potential to concurrently train graduate students to be reflective teachers, gain research experience, and integrate their teaching and research skills. In this paper, we explore SoTL's reported impact on graduate students' professional development and academic job searches.

At the same time that the SoTL movement has grown, what it means to be a future faculty member has changed. Tenure-track academic jobs at research universities are becoming harder for recent Ph.D.'s to find. Cross and Goldenberg's (2009) research on hiring at elite research universities over the past decade shows that tenure-track job numbers at these institutions are flat or falling, while non-tenure track faculty numbers are increasing. In addition, Finkelstein (2006) finds that several new models for academic careers have emerged over the last decade, including non-tenure track faculty careers, part-time faculty careers, and faculty careers with more specialized roles, "i.e., teaching OR research OR administration" (pp. 202-203). Training for graduate students has not caught up with these trends. Top research universities continue to train doctoral students, particularly in the arts and sciences, for traditional academic careers, and faculty mentors measure the success of their graduate programs by their mentees'

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placement in prestigious institutions (Cross & Goldenberg, 2009). Despite changes in the academic career and the increasingly tight job market, Nettles and Millet (2006) report that the majority of graduate students in the arts and sciences – 73% in the humanities, 59% in math and sciences, and 55% in social sciences – plan to seek postdoctoral or academic appointments. Given that the diversification of academic careers is in tension with the expectations of faculty mentors and their graduate student protégés, we should critically explore what skills SoTL develops for future faculty and its potential as a professional development tool.

While it is extremely important to prepare graduate students with teaching and research experience for traditional tenure-track faculty careers, it is unclear whether advanced scholarly teaching training, such as SoTL, is an asset for academic job search candidates, particularly given the shifting trends in academic careers. Several empirical studies of job advertisements and search committees suggest that while teaching effectiveness and research experience are important keys to success on the academic job market, SoTL does not appear to be on the radar of search committees as a consistent criterion for evaluating a candidate's teaching or research abilities. In their study of academic job postings in the United States and Canada in 2002, Schönwetter, Taylor, and Ellis (2006) found that over 60% of job advertisements for positions in the United States requested some information on teaching experience, and requests for research experience were made by 17% of American job ads. However, though SoTL work could be a reflection of both teaching credibility and research proficiency, no job advertisements specifically called for SoTL experience (D. Schönwetter, personal communication, October 7, 2010). Similarly, Meizlish and Kaplan (2008) examined job advertisements and surveyed job search committee chairs during the 2004-2005 academic year, and found that teaching ability is crucial to the hiring process; 91.5% of job search committee respondents ranked teaching ability as important or very important to the academic hiring process (p. 495). However, in open-ended responses, job search committees never mentioned SoTL as a tool to evaluate teaching effectiveness (D. Meizlish, personal communication, September 30, 2010). In his study of academic hiring in the STEM fields, Hernandez (2007) found that department chairs placed different value on job candidates' participation in formal teacher preparation programs (such as university teaching certificate programs for graduate students, which sometimes require SoTL) depending on their disciplinary and institutional context. The NSF-funded "Longitudinal Study of Future STEM Faculty" (<http://lsff.wceruw.org/>) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is currently exploring how participation in teaching-focused professional development activities affects STEM doctoral students' careers, but the findings of this study are still forthcoming.

Several studies discuss the potential role of SoTL experience during graduate school in developing future faculty and their career goals. Sublett, Walsh, McKinney, and Faigao (2010) found that students who were involved in the Illinois State University SoTL grant program reported that their experience with SoTL during graduate school led them to consider a teaching career, and that they became better researchers as a result. Given that SoTL integrates research and teaching, it is unclear whether these graduate students saw their participation in SoTL projects as professional development more broadly beyond teaching. Huber's (2001, 2004) research on the career paths of four SoTL scholars suggests that graduate school was a formative period for scholars' intellectual interest in research on teaching and learning. Pescosolido et al. (2004) argue that because SoTL has the potential to develop the skills necessary for "complete scholars" who are excellent at teaching, instructional scholarship, public service and research, there may be no other vehicle to better fulfill the goals of doctoral training than SoTL (p. 156).

McKinney, Jarvis, Creasey, and Herrmann (2010) encourage faculty to involve students in SoTL, but in their informative discussion of the ethical concerns of involving students in SoTL, they do not address the potential opportunity costs of or career ramifications for graduate student engagement in this type of scholarship. Despite assertions about SoTL's potential for graduate student development, as Pescosolido et al. (2004) report, many graduate students' faculty mentors worry that spending time on new forms of scholarship, such as SoTL, takes time away from what they perceive to be more important graduate student development experiences, such as dissertation and disciplinary research. Austin (2002) found in her study of graduate student socialization that graduate student development emphasizes the importance of traditional disciplinary research over other forms of scholarship, such as those related to teaching or service. In his study on participation in formal teacher preparation programs by STEM academic job candidates, Hernandez (2007) found that department chairs at some institution types (e.g., research universities) and disciplines placed little value on formal teaching qualifications compared to less formal teaching experiences, research credentials or postdoctoral experience. In her study of faculty who conduct SoTL work, Huber (2001) found that faculty colleagues warned junior faculty that working on SoTL rather than traditional disciplinary research "wouldn't serve the goal of getting promoted" (p. 27).

Given these studies discussed above suggest job search committees do not appear to be seeking candidates with SoTL experience and that scholars may not be rewarded for pursuing non-traditional scholarship, faculty mentors may be correct to caution their graduate students about spending their resources of time and talents during graduate school on SoTL. Due to the lack of research on the empirical questions of whether SoTL is a successful tool for graduate student professional development and whether SoTL is valued on the academic job market, we explore the following questions in this paper. Broadly speaking, what do candidates for academic positions feel is the impact of SoTL experience on their job market success and professional development? More specifically, first, how is SoTL reportedly received on the academic job market? Second, to explain this perceived impact, how do graduate students perceive that SoTL affects their professional development, including progress in graduate school, publication experience, collaborative research experience, experience receiving research grants, and conference presentations?

I. Methods.

While the research highlighted in the previous section suggests that job search committees do not explicitly seek out candidates with SoTL experience (Meizlish & Kaplan, 2008; Schönwetter et al., 2006), this is not to say that a candidate's SoTL involvement is irrelevant to job market success and graduate student development. Here, we explore the perceived role that SoTL played in the professional development of graduate students and in their academic job searches by surveying those who conducted SoTL during their graduate student careers. In this section, we will discuss the recruitment of respondents and the survey instrument.

The population of potential respondents was people who conducted SoTL research as graduate students. We used a snowball sampling technique to identify this sample. We reached out to a variety of email group-lists to identify respondents who took part in SoTL research as graduate students. The email group-lists were national – the ISSOTL and POD listservs and the CIRTL Cafe website – and institution-specific, including recipients of the Investigating Student Learning grants at University of Michigan, the Graduate Teaching Consultants at University of

Michigan, and the graduate teaching certificate program participants at Vanderbilt University (SoTL is a requirement of the certificate program). We asked respondents to forward the survey to other colleagues who also conducted SoTL research as graduate students, and directly contacted our own colleagues who we knew had conducted SoTL during graduate school. Through this technique of snowball sampling, we hoped to reach a wider range of respondents than our original group-lists. The survey was launched in April 2009, and the data presented here reflect 97 responses that we gathered from April-October 2009. Two respondents reported that they did graduate study in Canada, and the rest of respondents did graduate work in the United States. Qualitative responses were also solicited, and illustrative quotes are presented.

Since there is not a readily identifiable population of graduate students who do SoTL from which we could draw for a pure, externally valid random sample, our targeted snowball survey design was appropriate for exploring our research question. We acknowledge the weaknesses in this approach. In particular, our results do not explain why some graduate students do not pursue SoTL work. If some students were discouraged from conducting SoTL work by faculty advisors, we might expect such students to have a less positive view of SoTL as a vehicle for graduate student development. Since we surveyed only those who did conduct SoTL work as graduate students, these students may be the population most predisposed to having favorable perceptions of the role of SoTL work in graduate student development and the academic job search. Despite these weaknesses, the results of this exploratory survey provide a useful snapshot of the perceived role that SoTL work plays in graduate student development and the academic job search. This research design allows us to learn from the cases of graduate students who had successfully incorporated SoTL into their graduate training. Huber's (2001, 2004) work on designing faculty careers around SoTL is a useful comparison here. Huber (2001) takes lessons from faculty who successfully balanced SoTL work in their faculty careers, and argues that these "encouraging stories may prove even more useful than cautionary tales to those who undertake such work themselves or advise others who want to make new kinds of scholarship a significant part of their academic careers" (p. 22).

Our survey asked a variety of questions to capture the respondents' experiences with SoTL conducted during their graduate school careers and their experiences on the job market. In particular, we were interested in how respondents felt their experiences with SoTL impacted their professional development and job search. The full survey instrument is available at <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~lnschram/Site/Teaching_Materials_files/SoTL_survey.pdf>. We asked a variety of demographic questions including: area of graduate study, subject of SoTL work, and current position (e.g., graduate student or faculty). Since we are interested in how SoTL impacts graduate student development, we asked a variety of questions related to professional development, including whether the respondents perceived that SoTL affected time-to-degree, faculty SoTL research collaboration, grants received for SoTL work, and whether a publication or conference presentation resulted from the work. Many of our survey questions focused on the respondents' job searches, if applicable. We asked if respondents presented their SoTL research in application materials and in interviews. Among the respondents who presented their SoTL work as part of their applications and in interviews, we solicited their perceptions of how the interviewers reacted to their SoTL project and whether their SoTL project was helpful in their academic job searches.

II. Results: Perceived Impact on Academic Job Market Experience.

This section presents and analyzes our survey results as they pertain to the perceived impact of SoTL on the academic job market experience, in both quantitative and qualitative forms. We had 97 respondents from a variety of disciplines (Table 1), with education and the social sciences each representing approximately one-third of respondents.

Table 1. Field of Study of Survey Respondents (97 respondents).

Percent of Respondents	
Social Sciences	30%
Education	29%
STEM	24%
Humanities	9%
Total Respondents	97

We explored whether responses on other measures might differ by discipline, and did not find any differences by disciplinary background. However, because our sample is so small and overrepresented by two disciplines, we cannot make conclusions about the importance of disciplinary context.

Of our 97 respondents, nearly half (45) took part or were in the midst of taking part in a faculty job search. Unfortunately, we did not track what types of faculty jobs respondents were seeking, so we are unable to explore whether respondents seeking different types of academic jobs had different experiences. This would be an important question to include in future work. We do know that of those with faculty positions, 64% respondents (39 of 61) were teaching at research institutions (Figure 1).

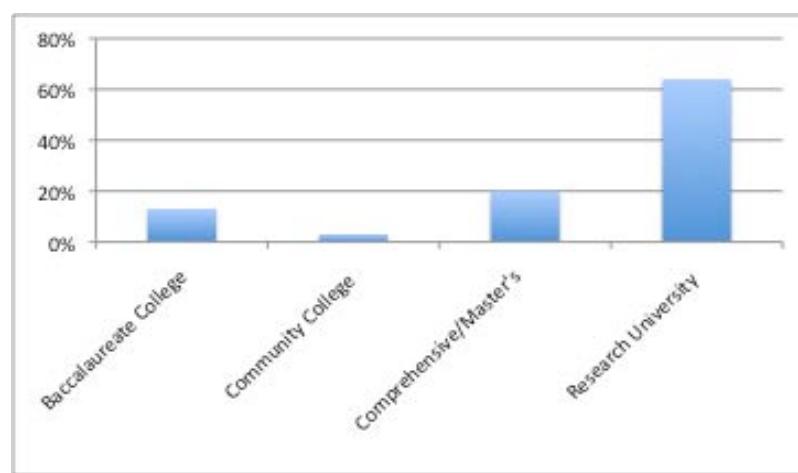


Figure 1. Type of Institution Where Respondent Teaches (N = 61 respondents).

Because past research suggests job search committees do not ask for evidence of SoTL work as part of academic job applications or in interviews, we wanted to examine how applicants framed their SoTL work as part of their job application materials. Respondents provided

information about their SoTL work in their job packets (see Table 2). The vast majority of respondents included their SoTL work on their Curricula Vitae. For some respondents, their SoTL project led to a publication that was listed on their C.V. Nearly half of respondents included their SoTL work in their cover letter, highlighting the work. Many also discussed their SoTL research in their teaching philosophies.

Table 2. How Respondent Presented SoTL Project in Job Applications (N = 45 respondents).

Percent of Respondents	
Curriculum Vitae	80%
Cover Letter	49%
Teaching Philosophy	58%

Note. Respondents could select more than one response option.

Nearly half of respondents (47%) indicated that they were questioned about their SoTL project during interviews, while many others (44%) brought it up themselves (Table 3). Only 16% (7 of 45) of the respondents who went on the academic job market did not discuss their SoTL work in their interviews. This finding is striking because, although past research found no mention of SoTL in job postings or by search committees, our respondents indicated that many job search committees did question an applicant about SoTL work that appeared in his or her job application materials. This suggests that SoTL work may be one way that search committees evaluated candidates' teaching and/or classroom research effectiveness.

Table 3. Discussion of SoTL in Academic Job Interviews (45 respondents).

Percent of Respondents	
I was questioned	47%
I brought it up	44%
Did not discuss at all	16%

Note. Respondents could select more than one response option.

We were interested in how respondents perceived that interviewers reacted to their SoTL work in academic job interviews. Therefore, we asked: "If you did discuss your project during interviews, which of the following best characterizes the reaction you perceive that you received about the project during the interviews?" Figure 2 shows the responses to this question. Overwhelmingly, respondents perceived positive reactions to their SoTL work. Of the respondents that are currently teaching at baccalaureate institution – i.e. schools with more of a focus on teaching – only one of seven respondents (14%) reported a neutral reaction, and all others reported a positive reaction (one respondent did not answer the question). Among the respondents teaching at master's institutions, 64% (7 of 11) of respondents reported positive reactions. Finally, those respondents that are at research universities reported the lowest perceptions of positive reactions (39% or 12 of 31), while many of these respondents indicated "other" reactions. Unfortunately, most respondents did not expand to describe these reactions, so we do not know the nature of these responses. We must be careful to draw any broad generalizations about this institutional breakdown due to our small sample size. With that caveat,

however, it is interesting to note that respondents who ended up taking jobs at baccalaureate and master's institutions did report more perceived favorable reactions to their SoTL work. This raises the question of whether different institutions do, in fact, value SoTL work differently.

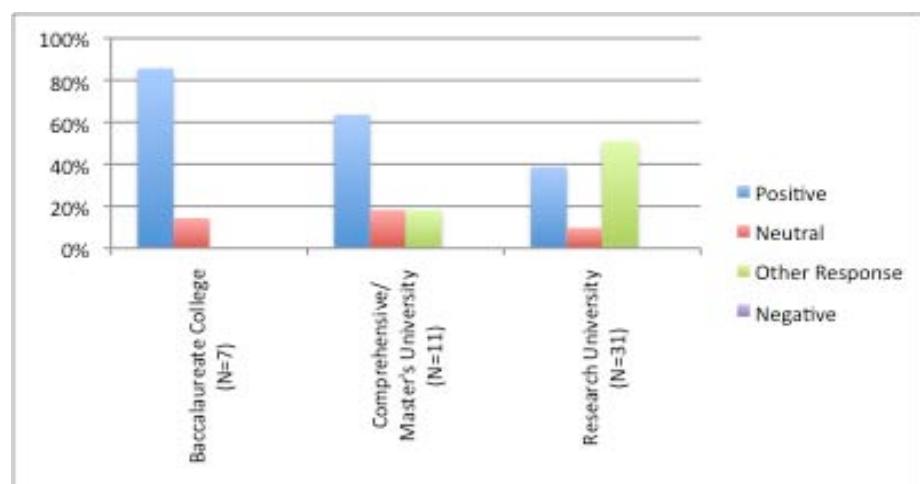


Figure 2. Reaction to SoTL Project During Academic Job Interview.

Note. Other Response includes: “Don’t Know,” “Too Early to say,” and “N/A”; Respondents teaching at community colleges are not included because the only two responses were “Don’t Know” and “N/A”.

Although, no one who responded to this survey item indicated a negative perceived reaction to their SoTL work in their interview. However, we did give respondents the option to elaborate in qualitative responses, and one respondent who selected “other” in response to the close-ended question reported a perceived negative reaction at one institution. This respondent articulated negative reactions at one institution, and positive reactions at another:

“It was sneered at by an interviewer from a well-known research institution. It was positively received by interviewers from a less-well-known research institution (where I accepted a job).”

We also asked, “To what degree would you agree with this statement: My scholarship of teaching and learning project was helpful in my academic job search?” Very few respondents felt that their SoTL work as graduate students hurt their academic job search (Figure 3). On the contrary, the majority of respondents (nearly 70%) agreed or strongly agreed that their SoTL project was helpful in their academic job search. The qualitative responses we received on the survey illustrate why SoTL was a positive experience for the job market:

“There is absolutely no downside to SoTL research. It has completely changed the way I think about myself as an academic and the future career goals I have set for myself.”

“The project prepared me to speak intelligently about teaching and learning as a discipline during my interview. It was also a major component of my teaching portfolio.”

“It was helpful in that I realized I did not want to work at a place that devalued

that type of research. It was also helpful in making me confident in my ultimate choice of where to work - where my teaching experience and interest was viewed as a plus, not a minus.”

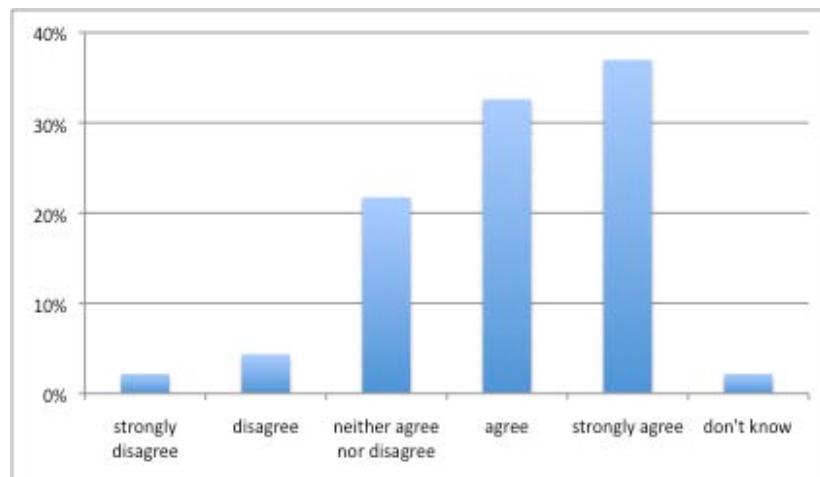


Figure 3. Overall Perception of Whether SoTL Project Was Helpful in Academic Job Search (N = 46 respondents).

While the majority felt graduate student involvement in SoTL projects positively impacted the job market experience, this result was not unanimous; there were three respondents (7%) who disagreed that SoTL was helpful in their academic job search. Respondents used the open-ended response option to articulate why their SoTL work was not helpful:

“Some faculty members stated outright that the project would be of little practical use in my career advancement.”

“The project seemed like busywork to get the certificate - it was perhaps the least valuable part of the experience.”

These comments suggest that SoTL experience is less productive for graduate students when its perceived value as a requirement for a teaching certificate is low, or when graduate student mentors are unsupportive of the work.

Given that the majority of respondents perceived that SoTL experience was seen positively by interviewers and had a positive impact on their academic job search, how can we understand the nature of that impact? In the next section, we turn to the graduate student development experience to illustrate how SoTL can lead to publication, conference presentation, grant opportunities, and research collaborations, which all play a role in job market success.

III. Results: How SoTL Prepares Graduate Students for the Academic Job Market.

In this section, we explore how SoTL reportedly affected professional development experiences that prepare students for future faculty positions. SoTL projects are one avenue for graduate students to experience research collaboration, and SoTL collaborations provide opportunities for students to work with faculty mentors and colleagues who are scholarly teachers. We asked respondents whether their faculty advisors were supportive, ambivalent or unsupportive of their

SoTL projects. Sixty-six percent of respondents (63 of 95) said their advisor was either somewhat or very supportive, while only 6% (6 of 95) reported that their advisor was either somewhat or very unsupportive. Many of our respondents worked with at least one collaborator on their SoTL projects (Figure 4). Only about a third conducted their SoTL project on their own.

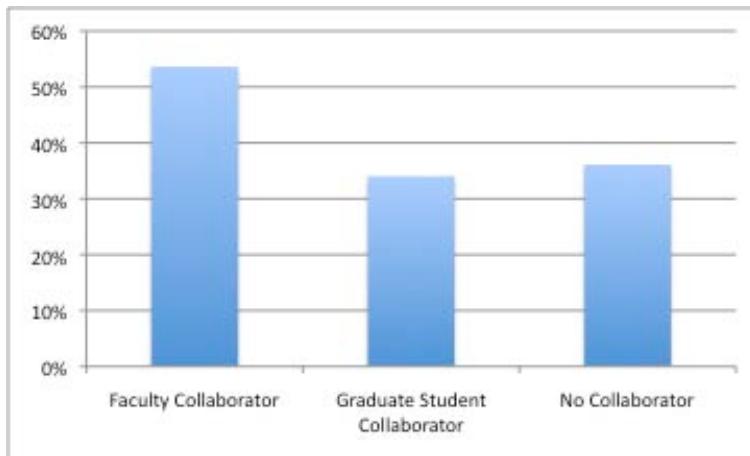


Figure 4: Collaboration on SoTL Project (97 respondents).

Note. Respondents could select more than one category.

In addition, 30% of respondents (18 of 97) received funding for their SoTL projects. This is yet another way that SoTL serves as a form of professional development, since applying for grants and funding for research is an integral part of the faculty career. Finally, Figure 5 illustrates the outcomes of our respondents' SoTL projects. Eighty-one respondents (84%) produced at least one publication or conference presentation as a result of their SoTL project. Presenting conference papers and submitting papers for publication are important skills for graduate students to develop as they prepare for a faculty career.

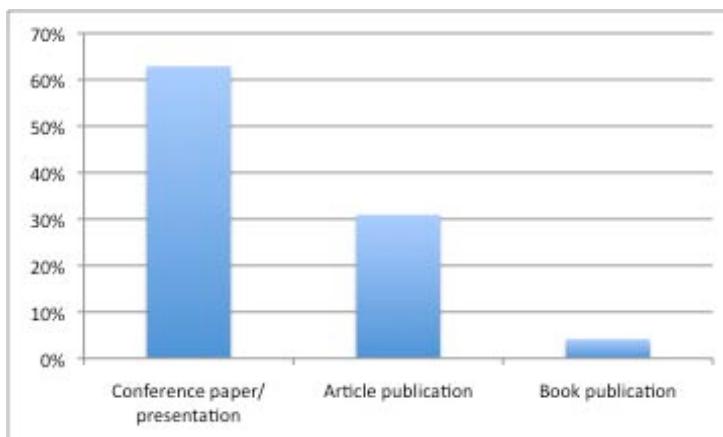


Figure 5. Outcome of SoTL Project (97 respondents).

Note. Respondents could select more than one category.

We also asked respondents how they felt working on SoTL impacted their time-to-degree (Figure 6). A criticism of SoTL work is that it may take away from dissertation-related work, thus increasing the time it takes to finish graduate school. For the majority (65% of 61 of 94) of respondents, they did not perceive this to be the case. In fact, some respondents indicated in their

qualitative comments that their involvement with SoTL was critical for finishing; their SoTL work helped some students secure funding for graduate work, while for others SoTL work helped them manage the demands on their time. For example, one respondent stated, “[My] SoTL project provided funding for me to finish, [and] without [the] SoTL project [I] would not have been able to continue in grad school.” Another reported that, “being involved in education research in addition to my chemistry research helped me to focus and plan my time more efficiently, and therefore is not affecting the amount of time my degree is taking.”

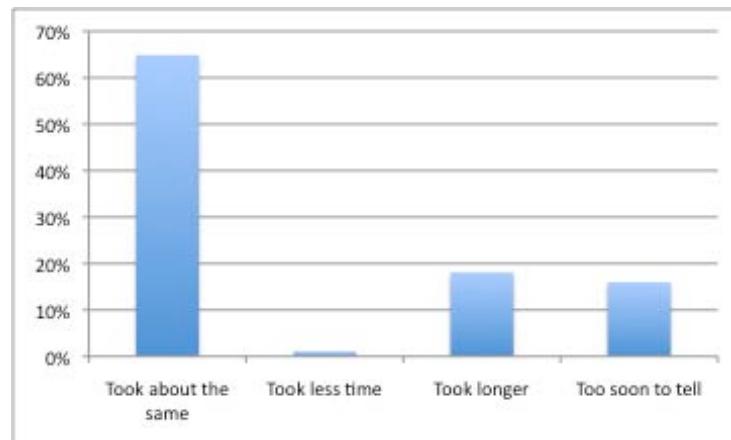


Figure 6. Impact of SoTL Project on Time-to-Degree (N = 94 respondents).

However, a significant minority (18% of 17 of 94) of our respondents felt that being involved in a SoTL project increased their time-to-degree. One respondent explained, “*I had to spend time every day working on the project. Unfortunately, the line of work was not directly related to my area of study. So I could not recycle anything from the project into my area of study and research.*” Thus, it appears that SoTL does have the potential effect of lengthening time-to-degree.

Given that faculty advisors are not necessarily supportive of graduate student mentees’ SoTL work, educational developers may also be interested to know what support graduate students reportedly received from their universities’ teaching and learning centers. Sixty-one percent of respondents reported receiving some service related to their SoTL project from their faculty development center, ranging from consultations to Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) and mentorship programs (see Figure 7). Graduate student involvement in SoTL provides an opportunity for future faculty to connect with educational developers, who support faculty throughout their careers, early on in their academic lives.

IV. Discussion and Conclusions.

The results of our exploratory survey suggest that SoTL provides many opportunities for graduate students to develop as future faculty, serving as a vehicle for publication, research collaboration, conference presentation, and grant application. Furthermore, the majority of respondents perceived that SoTL participation did not negatively affect their time-to-degree. In order to minimize the possibility of lengthening time-to-degree, one successful strategy appears to be collaboration (discussed more below). Another successful strategy would be for graduate

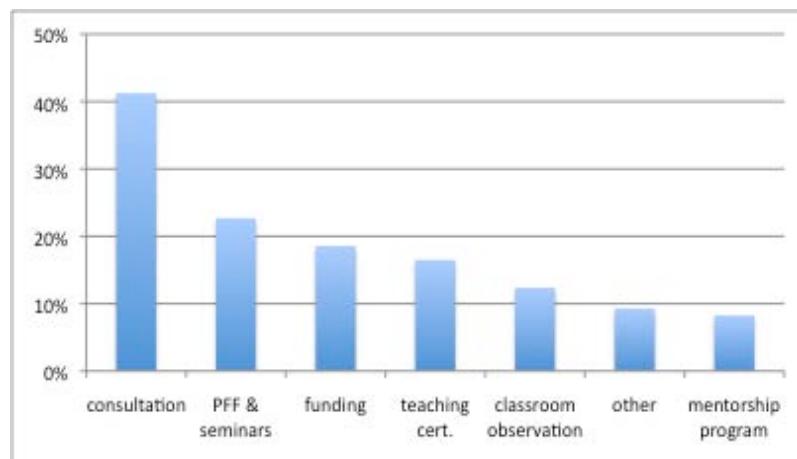


Figure 7. Support from Faculty Development Center (N = 97 respondents).

Note. Respondents could select more than one category.

students to link SoTL work to their other scholarship, such as a topic related to disciplinary research and/or a topic that can be explored in their own classrooms, as qualitative comments discussed above suggest projects unrelated to disciplinary scholarship lengthened time-to-degree. Almost all respondents who had taken part in an academic job search considered SoTL as a helpful asset during the academic job search, and qualitative responses suggest that this is partly because SoTL prepared scholars to speak intelligently about teaching in their job interviews. Austin (2002) argues that “all students who aspire to be faculty members should have opportunities to think deeply about teaching” (p. 114), and our exploratory survey results suggest that SoTL is an excellent means for achieving this goal. Our qualitative results also suggest that SoTL work helps graduate students reflect on their interests and identify careers that reflect these interests.

From the success stories shared in the responses to our exploratory survey, we can learn useful lessons for graduate students and faculty mentors interested in involving graduate students in SoTL. We discuss three lessons below: 1) successful SoTL projects conducted during graduate school are often joint endeavors – with help from faculty mentors, educational developers, and graduate student colleagues; 2) teaching and learning centers play a valuable role in encouraging this work; and 3) SoTL conducted during graduate school can serve as a signal to job search committees that a scholar is interested in this work and, therefore, help her to find an academic position that is a good fit.

First, mentorship and collaboration at the graduate stage appear to be extremely influential for novice SoTL scholars. As discussed earlier, the majority of respondents reported that their faculty advisors were supportive of their work, and faculty mentors played a large part in SoTL projects of our respondents. As illustrated by the large number of reported faculty collaborators (see Figure 4), collaboration with a faculty mentor can be a key to success. Lacking faculty mentorship, some graduate students have found that collaboration with likeminded graduate student colleagues can be a successful route to overcome the difficulty of conducting SoTL at the graduate student career stage. As discussed above (see Figure 4), many of our respondents had graduate student collaborators on their SoTL projects. As one respondent put it:

“The various SoTL research/writing projects I’ve been involved in have been in collaboration with another graduate student. We did not have a faculty

supervisor. This work was done out of sheer interest and dedication to this work, and emerged from a shared work background in a Learning Commons.”

In sum, it appears from our results that faculty mentors and educational developers help graduate students to conduct and fund SoTL work, and lacking such support, graduate student colleagues and learning communities can provide the collaboration necessary to conduct this work. Such collaboration is essential for students to complete SoTL work without significantly affecting their time-to-degree.

Second, our results (see Figure 7) indicate that programs at teaching and learning centers also reportedly play a large role in enabling graduate students to successfully conduct SoTL. Teaching and learning centers can administer grant programs that encourage faculty-student SoTL collaborations, like the Investigating Student Learning grant program at the University of Michigan. These programs incentivize mentoring by faculty working with graduate students on SoTL. Some teaching and learning centers include a SoTL component in graduate teaching certificate programs, such as at Vanderbilt University. One respondent said:

“I created the basis for the project (...) as a requirement for a course I was taking towards the certificate in university teaching. 2 years later, I was still interested in the idea, and with some guidance was able to turn it into a SOTL project.”

SoTL experience during graduate school can also be integrated into preparing future faculty (PFF) programs, such as at Indiana University. Pescosolido et al. (2004) undertook their SoTL project involving graduate students as part of the PFF program in the sociology department at Indiana University, and argued that this was an excellent graduate student development experience. Teaching and learning centers that run PFF programs at their institutions can consider how to incorporate SoTL into the curriculum.

Lastly, our results also suggest that there are potential career paths for graduate students who wish to integrate teaching and research. By highlighting the successful cases where graduate students conducted SoTL research and found academic jobs, including many in research universities, we can show that graduate students who wish to do this type of work can succeed in academic career paths. This is, perhaps, welcome news to those who are predisposed to doing this type of work. We do, consistent with existing literature, see some variation in institutional context. Huber (2001, 2004) found in her interviews with faculty that SoTL may find warmer welcome in some departmental or institutional contexts, and we also found graduate student respondents reporting in open-ended responses that SoTL was appreciated in some institutional contexts but not others. In fact, for scholars interested in this type of work, SoTL experience early on in their careers often reportedly helped them to find an academic job that was welcoming to this type of scholarship. The issue of fit is extremely important, since one's fit with an institutional context helps one succeed in both the academic hiring process (Fuerstman & Lavertu, 2005) and as a junior faculty member.

Our survey results show that many scholars who conduct SoTL work during graduate school successfully find a position that welcomes their SoTL endeavors, ranging from traditional academic positions at research universities to less traditional routes, such as administration. Several quotes from our qualitative responses below illustrate these points:

“SOTL work helped me land my current job – [I] had met several faculty on the hiring committee for this position at SOTL conferences/panels.”

“[I] ended up choosing an administrative position over a faculty position, but my work and research is still in SoTL.”

This is particularly important given the changing nature of the academic career and the tight academic job market. Since SoTL prepares scholars to integrate research and teaching, it is a unique professional development experience that can be marketed to a variety of institutional contexts and for a diverse set of academic positions.

In conclusion, we find that, as Huber (2001, 2004) found at the faculty stage, at the graduate student stage there are those from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds who successfully design careers that integrate SoTL. However, there remain many unanswered questions. What are the perceptions of graduate students who were interested in SoTL but unable to conduct SoTL work at the graduate career stage? What are the perspectives of those who are hiring for academic jobs? What differences might exist by type of institution or discipline? Or, given the changing landscape of the academic career, by type of academic job? Future research should investigate not just graduate students’ perceptions about the role of SoTL in graduate student development and job market success, but also the views of job search committees from a variety of disciplinary and institutional contexts, as Meizlish and Kaplan (2008) explored in their study on the role of teaching in academic hiring. Although our findings suggest that job candidates perceived that SoTL was well-received by interviewers for the most part, we cannot know how search committees view SoTL in job application materials based on the perceptions of job candidates. As Ng’s (1997) research on the job search for academic jobs in psychology showed, often the perceptions of job candidates do not match the perceptions of search committees. It would be valuable for graduate students interested in SoTL, faculty mentors and graduate student developers to know not just the success stories shared here, but the views of search committees who will evaluate their candidacy on the academic job market. A valuable next step would be to survey academic search committees from a variety of institutions and disciplines to uncover how they evaluate candidates and what role, if any, SoTL research plays in these evaluations. In addition, analysis of successful graduate student SoTL scholars, similar to Huber’s (2001, 2004) work on faculty, would allow us to more deeply explore the mechanisms involved in effectively integrating SoTL into future faculty work.

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